

THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE

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The California State Legislature consists of the Assembly and the Senate.

The Senate, the Upper House:

- Has 40 members.
- Vacancies and number of Democrats and Republicans vary.
- The Senate has been in Democratic hands continuously since 1970.
- Members of the Senate serve four year terms and are limited to being elected twice.
- There are forty Senate districts, with half of the seats up for election on alternate (two year) election cycles.

The Assembly, the Lower House:

- Has 80 members.
- Vacancies and number of Democrats and Republicans vary.
- Except for the period from 1995 to 1996, the Assembly has been in Democratic hands since the 1970 election (even while the governor's office has gone back and forth between Republicans and Democrats).
- Members of the Assembly are elected from eighty districts, serve two year terms, and since 1990 are limited to being elected three times.

Legislative Committees

SENATE COMMITTEES

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - Appropriations | - Energy, Utilities and Communications | - Local Government |
| - Banking, Finance and Insurance | - Environmental Quality | - Natural Resources and Water |
| - Budget and Fiscal Review | - Food and Agriculture | - Public Employees and Retirement |
| - Business, Professions and Economic Development | - Governmental Organization | - Public Safety |
| - Education | - Health | - Revenue and Taxation |
| - Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments | - Human Services | - Rules |
| | - Judiciary | - Transportation and Housing |
| | - Labor and Industrial Relations | - Veterans Affairs |
| | - Legislative Ethics | |

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| - Aging and Long-Term Care | - Education | - Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy |
| - Accountability and Administrative Review | - Elections and Redistricting | - Judiciary |
| - Agriculture | - Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials | - Labor and Employment |
| - Appropriations | - Governmental Organization | - Local Government |
| - Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism, and Internet Media | - Health | - Natural Resources |
| - Banking and Finance | - Higher Education | - Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security |
| - Budget | - Housing and Community Development | - Public Safety |
| - Business and Professions | - Human Services | |
| | - Insurance | |

- Revenue and Taxation
- Rules
- Transportation
- Utilities and Commerce
- Veterans Affairs
- Water, Parks and Wildlife

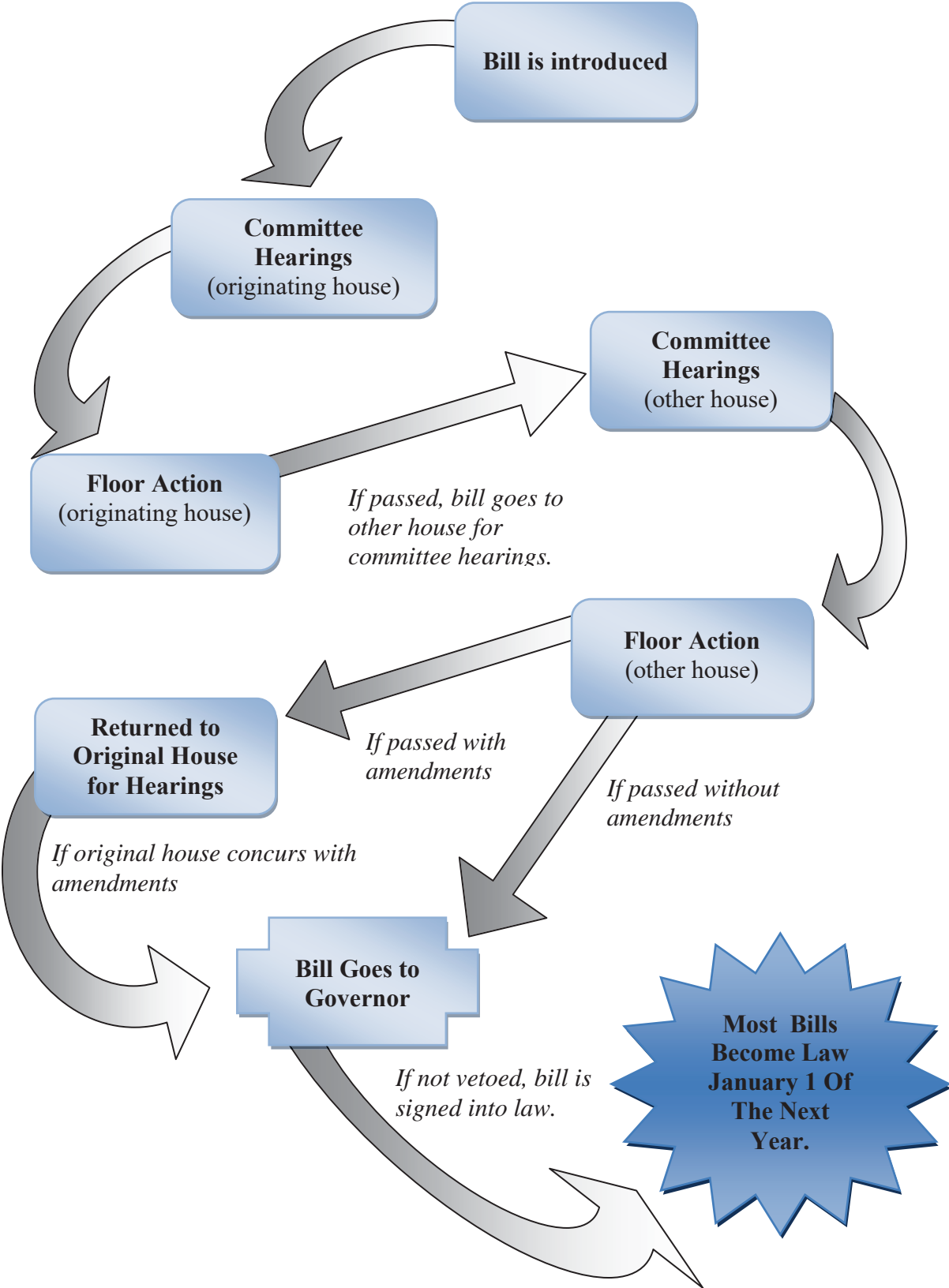
Note: Committees in bold are denoted on the legislator bios.

Legislative Caucuses

The word "caucus" generally refers to a group of legislators who come together in a formal association to pursue a common interest in specific issues. Such caucuses usually consist of legislators from more than one political party. A caucus may also consist of all legislators who belong to one political party.

- Senate Democratic Caucus
- Senate Republican Caucus
- Assembly Democratic Caucus
- Assembly Republican Caucus
- Asian Pacific Islander Caucus
- Latino Legislative Caucus
- Legislative Black Caucus
- Legislative Environmental Caucus
- Legislative Internet Caucus
- Legislative LGBT Caucus
- Legislative Outdoor Sporting Caucus
- Legislative Rural Caucus
- Legislative Women's Caucus
- Smart Growth Caucus

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



Bill is Introduced

The process begins when a Senator or Assembly Member decides to author a bill. If the author is a Senator, the bill is introduced in the Senate. If the author is an Assembly Member, the bill is introduced in the Assembly. No bill except the Budget Bill may be acted upon until 30 days have passed from the date of its introduction. Every bill must be read three times. The first reading is at the introduction. The whole process from introduction to a bill being signed into law typically takes about 9 -12 months

✦ Committee Hearings

The rules committee of the house assigns the bill to the appropriate policy committee according to subject area. For example, a Senate bill dealing with afterschool program reimbursement rates would first be assigned to the Senate or Education Committee for policy review. Bills that require the expenditure of funds must also be heard in the fiscal committees of each house.

During committee hearings testimony may be heard by supporters or people in opposition to the bill. The committee then votes on whether to pass the bill out of committee, or that it be passed as amended. It takes a majority vote of the committee membership for a bill to be passed and sent to the next committee or to the floor.

Prior to a bill's hearing, a bill analysis is prepared by committee staff that explains the intended effect of the bill on current law, together with background information. Analysis may list organizations that support or oppose the bill.

✦ Floor Action

Bills passed by committees are read a second and third time on the floor in the bill's house of origin. When a bill is read the third time it is explained by the author, discussed by the Members, and voted on by a roll call vote. If a bill is defeated, the Member may seek reconsideration and another vote.

✦ Repeat Process in Other House

Once the bill has been approved by the house of origin it proceeds to the other house where the procedure described above is repeated.

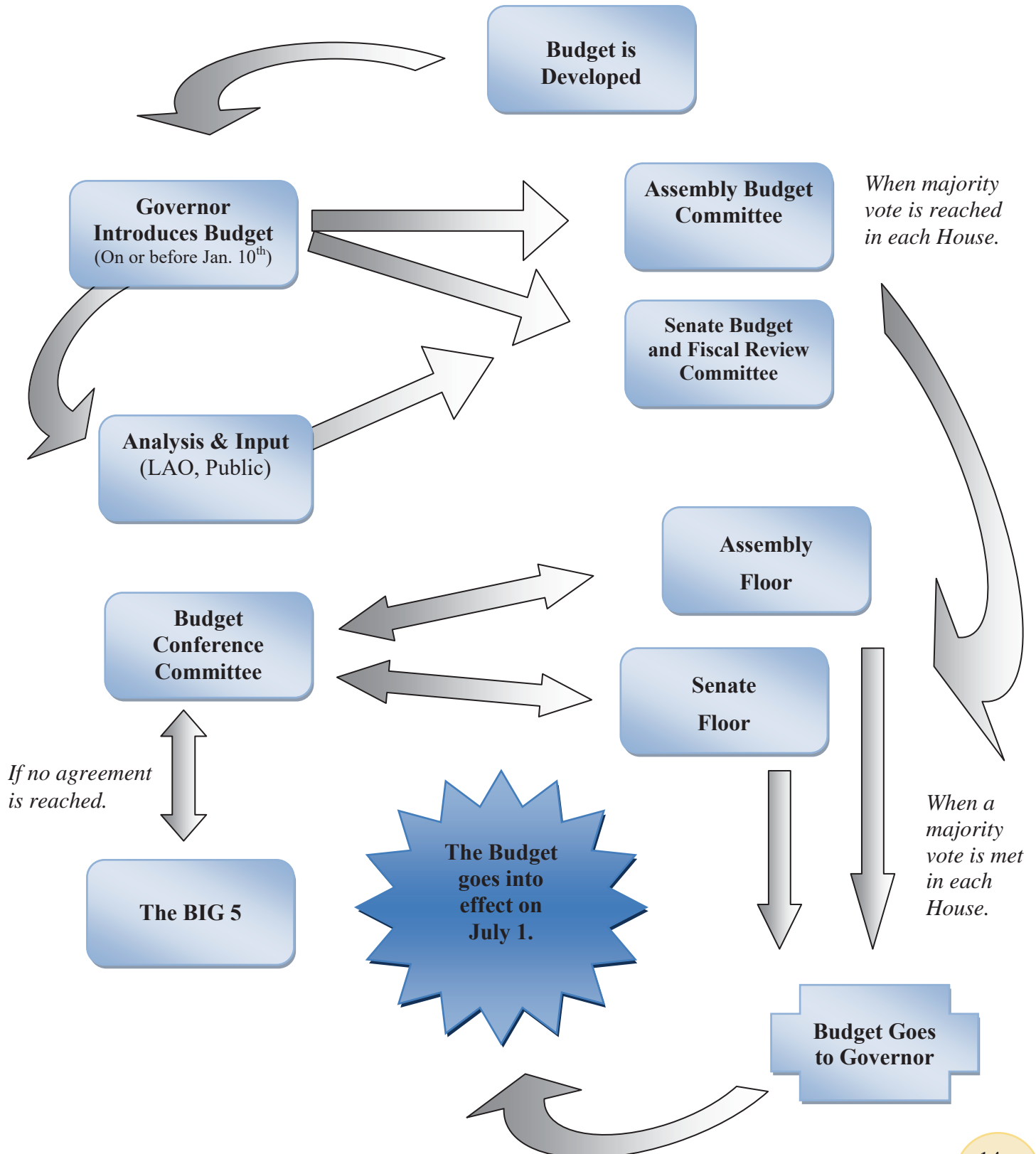
✦ Resolution of Differences

If a bill is amended in the second house, it must go back to the house of origin for agreement on those amendments. If the house of origin does not agree to those amendments, the bill is referred to a two-house conference committee to resolve the differences. If a compromise is reached, the bill is returned to both houses for a vote.

✦ Governor

If both houses approve a bill, the Governor has three choices: sign the bill into law, allow it to become law without his or her signature, or veto it. A governor's veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both houses. Most enacted bills go into effect on the first day of January of the next year. Urgency bills take effect immediately after they are enacted into law.

HOW A BUDGET IS PASSED



✦ Budget is Developed

Between June and August of each year, state departments develop budget proposals to augment their existing levels of service. Departments prepare Budget Change Proposals (BCPs), which are sent to the Department of Finance (DOF) for review. The DOF analyzes these budget proposals, estimates future state revenues and prepares a balanced expenditure plan for the Governor's approval.

✦ The Governor's Budget is Introduced

The Governor evaluates the DOF budget proposal and, on or before January 10th of each year, releases to the public and the California State Legislature the "Governor's Budget" for the coming fiscal year. The Governor's Budget is then introduced as two identical budget bills, one Assembly bill and one Senate bill, for consideration by each House.

The Legislative Analyst Office, the non-partisan financial review agency, prepares an extensive "Analysis of the Budget Bill" and "Perspectives and Issues" which includes program backgrounds, economic projections and recommended revisions.

✦ The Budget is Heard in Committees

The Assembly Budget Bill is referred to the Assembly Budget Committee, and the Senate Budget Bill is referred to the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee. The two committees divide their respective Budget Bills by subject matter and assign items to the appropriate budget subcommittees for public hearings. The Assembly and the Senate vote to pass their version of the Budget Bill. If either bill is not passed by the other house, it is sent to a Budget Conference Committee to iron out the differences between the two bills.

✦ Budget Conference Committee

Made up of five members from each House, it is formed to resolve the differences between the Assembly and Senate version of the Budget Bill. Generally, the committee is not allowed to consider new proposals or review those issues on which the two Houses already agree. Legislators may testify only on the first day of Conference Committee hearings. This is commonly known as "Members' Day," the last chance for legislators to influence what is included in the Budget.

✦ The Big 5

If the Budget Conference Committee cannot reach final agreement on the Budget, the "Big 5," consisting of the Governor, the President pro Tem of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the minority leaders of both Houses, often meet to resolve the stalemate.

✦ Governor

In May, the Governor releases the "May Revise" of the Budget Bill that includes the updated estimate of revenues and expenditures. The Governor has 12 working days to sign or veto the Budget Bill after receiving it from the Legislature. By using the line-item veto, the Governor may reduce or eliminate an appropriation before the Budget Bill is signed. The Legislature can override a line-item veto with a two-thirds vote of both Houses. Following the Governor's signature, the Budget Bill goes into effect on July 1.

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

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Act

A bill passed by the Legislature and enacted into law.

Amendment

Proposal to change the text of a bill after it has been introduced. Amendments must be submitted to the Legislative Counsel for drafting or approval.

Assembly

The house of the California Legislature consisting of 80 members, elected from districts determined on the basis of population. Two Assembly districts are situated within each Senate district.

Author

Member of the Legislature who introduces a legislative measure.

Bill

A proposed law, introduced during a session for consideration by the Legislature, and identified numerically in order of presentation; also, a reference that may include joint and concurrent resolutions and constitutional amendments.

Budget

Proposed expenditure of state moneys for the next fiscal year, presented by the Governor in January of each year for consideration by the Legislature; compiled by the Department of Finance, in conjunction with state agency and department heads.

Budget Act

The Budget Act is the final Budget Bill, as enacted by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.

Budget Change Proposal (BCP)

A proposal to change the level of service or funding for activities authored by the Legislature.

Budget Committees

The Senate and the Assembly committee that review the Governor's budget proposal.

Budget Conference Committee

Group of six members made up of three representatives from each House who are appointed to consider State Budget matters upon which the two Houses disagree.

Budget Year

The fiscal year addressed by a proposed budget, beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

COLA

Cost-of-living adjustment.

Caucus

- (1) A closed meeting of legislators of one's own party.
- (2) Any group of legislators who coalesce formally because of their common interest in specific issues.

Chamber

The Assembly or Senate location where floor sessions are held.

Coauthor

A member of either house whose name is added to a bill as a coauthor by amending the bill, usually indicating support for the proposal.

Constituent

A person who resides within the district represented by a legislator.

Constitutional Amendment

A resolution proposing a change to the California Constitution. It may be presented by the Legislature or by initiative, and is adopted upon voter approval at a statewide election.

District

The area of the state represented by a legislator. Each district is determined by population and is designated by a number. There are 40 Senate districts and 80 Assembly districts.

Fiscal Bill

Generally, a measure that contains an appropriation of funds or requires a state agency to incur

additional expense. The Legislative Counsel's designation of whether a bill is a fiscal bill appears at the end of the Digest found in the printed bill. Fiscal bills must be heard by the Assembly and Senate Appropriations Committees in addition to the policy committees in each house.

Fiscal Committee

The Appropriations Committee in the Assembly and the Appropriations Committee in the Senate, to which each fiscal bill is referred upon approval by policy committee. If the fiscal committee approves a bill, it then moves to the floor.

Fiscal Year

The 12-month period on which the state budget is planned, beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the following year. The federal fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30 of the following year.

Floor

- (1) The Assembly or Senate Chamber.
- (2) The term used to describe the location of a bill or the type of session, connoting action to be taken by the house. Matters may be said to be "on the floor."

Hearing

A committee meeting convened for the purpose of gathering information on a subject or considering specific legislative measures.

House

In California, refers to either the Senate or the Assembly.

Initiative

A legislative proposal to change statutory law or the California Constitution, submitted directly by members of the public rather than by the Legislature, and requiring voter approval at a statewide election. To qualify for a statewide ballot, a statutory initiative must receive signatures equal to 5 percent, and a constitutional amendment initiative must receive signatures equal to 8 percent, of the votes for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election.

Joint Session

The Assembly and Senate meeting together, usually in the Assembly Chamber. The purpose ordinarily is to receive special information such as the Governor's State of the State address.

Laws

The rules adopted by formal governmental action that govern our lives in various respects.

Legislative Analyst Office

The Legislature's nonpartisan fiscal analyst who analyzes the Governor's Budget and recommends changes. It is the most comprehensive review of the Budget Bill. The Perspectives and Issues is designed to assist the Legislature in setting its priorities and reflecting them in the Budget Bill and other legislations. It provides perspectives on the state's fiscal condition and the Governor's Budget, and identifies some of the major issues facing the Legislature.

Lieutenant Governor

The President of the Senate, as so designated by the California Constitution, allowing him or her to preside over the Senate and cast a vote only in the event of a tie. If the Governor cannot assume his or her duties or is absent from the state, the Lieutenant Governor assumes that office for the remainder of the term or during the absence.

Line-Item Veto

The authority of the Governor to reduce or eliminate items of appropriation while approving the rest of the bill. Also known as a "Blue Pencil" veto.

Majority Floor Leader

Assembly Member who is an issues and political strategist for the Assembly's majority party, second in command to the Assembly Speaker. Elected by the members of the Assembly's majority party.

Majority Leader

Senator who is an issues and political strategist for the Senate's majority party, second in command to the Senate President pro Tempore. Elected by the members of the Senate's majority party.

Majority Vote

A vote of more than half of the legislative body considering a measure. Constituted by 41 votes in the Assembly, and by 21 votes in the Senate.

Majority Whip

One of the members of the majority party's leadership team in the Assembly or Senate; responsible for monitoring legislation and securing votes for legislation on the floor.

May Revision

Occurring in early May, the updated estimate of revenues and expenditures that replaces the estimates contained in the Governor's budget submitted in January.

Measure

A bill, resolution, or constitutional amendment that is considered by the Legislature.

Minority Floor Leader

The highest-ranking minority party post in each house; chief policy and political strategist for the minority party.

Minority Whip

One of the members of the minority party's leadership team in the Assembly or Senate; responsible for monitoring legislation and securing votes for legislation on the floor.

Nonfiscal Bill

A measure not having specified financial impact on the state and, therefore, not required to be heard in an Assembly or Senate fiscal committee as it moves through the legislative process. Nonfiscal bills are subject to different legislative calendar than fiscal bills.

Officers

Those Members and employees of the Legislature who are elected by the membership of each house at the beginning of each session to perform specific functions on behalf of the house. Assembly officers

include the Speaker, Speaker pro Tempore, Chief Clerk, and Sergeant-at-Arms. Senate officers include the President pro Tempore, Secretary of the Senate, and Sergeant-at-Arms.

Senate

The house of the California Legislature consisting of 40 members elected from districts apportioned on the basis of population, one-half of whom are elected or re-elected every two years for four-year terms.

Session

The period during which the Legislature meets. The Legislature may meet in either regular or special (extraordinary) session.

Speaker

The presiding officer of the Assembly, elected by the membership of the Assembly at the beginning of the two-year session. This is the highest-ranking Member of the Assembly.

Speaker Pro Tempore

Member, appointed to this office by the Speaker, who presides over a floor session of the Assembly at the request of the Speaker.

Sponsor

The Member of the Legislature, private individual, or group who develops a measure and advocates its passage.